



March 10, 2008

Washington Department of Natural Resources
Aquatic Resources Division
ATTN: Kyle Murphy, Aquatic Reserves Program Manager
P.O. Box 47027
Olympia, WA 98504-7027

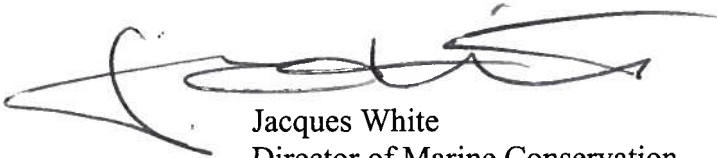
Dear Mr. Murphy:

I am writing on behalf of The Nature Conservancy in support of proposed aquatic reserve designations near Protection Island and Smith/Minor Islands, as nominated to the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by People For Puget Sound.

The Nature Conservancy recognizes these places as significant both for habitat and biological diversity. Both sites were identified as important biodiversity areas through our own ecoregional assessment work, and I understand that DNR staff have identified them as priority marine conservation sites.

Establishment of state aquatic reserves at Protection Island and at Smith/Minor Islands will protect vital habitat for a wide variety of resident and migrating species, both above and below the water's surface. The Nature Conservancy strongly supports these proposals. We appreciate your work on and consideration of marine habitat conservation in Washington.

Sincerely,



Jacques White
Director of Marine Conservation
The Nature Conservancy in Washington